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ABSTRACT

Descriptions of the perfective aspect in Russian taken from Miklosich, Saxmatov, Peskovsky, Fortunatov, and Karcevskij serve as background reading to the author's discussion of the problem. He explores three basic questions: (1) Is aspect a Russian problem in grammar or lexicography; (2) What is the nature of the correlation between the perfective and imperfective forms; and (3) What is the meaning of imperfective? The unity of the perfective aspect is considered in the light of its sub-aspects. An extensive discussion on "aspect opposition between the beginning and the end of the action" precedes a section treating modifiers. A new definition of the perfective concludes the study. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (RL)

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THE MEANING OF THE PERFECTIVE ASPECT IN RUSSIAN*

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The proper note for beginning a paper—any paper—on the perfective aspect in Russian is one of apology. So much has already been written on the subject by such excellent grammarians that the chance of saying anything new that is both sober and relevant seems negligible. The only thing that one can urge in justification of the project is that, though the list of writers includes such names as de Saussure, Meillet, Peškovskij, Šaxmatov as well as some of the most eminent living Slavicists, there is still no universal agreement even among the best grammarians on precisely what the nature of the perfective aspect is.

Perhaps, the best introduction to the paper is a brief outline of the more important theories that have been advanced to explain this phenomenon. The reader can find a more detailed description of the chief statements together with some interesting historical data in Vinogradov's excellent annotated chrestomathy of Russian grammatical literature.[1] But the following outline covers the chief points.

PREVIOUS DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PERFECTIVE ASPECT

1. *The perfective aspect represents the completed action.* Miklosich,[2] in the following definition of the perfective aspect, was not attempting to describe it for Russian alone, but for the Slavic languages in general. However, many grammarians accept the same or similar definitions specifically for the Russian perfective:

> An action is stated as either enduring or completed: the first is realized by means of imperfective verbs, the second by means of perfective verbs.

This same concept forms part of the basis of the account in the Russian grammar by Avanesov and Sidorov:[3]

> Depending on how the course of the action is expressed in reference to

* I am deeply indebted to my informants Mr and Mrs Peter Isaac and Mr and Mrs George Malysheff for their long patience and unfailing cooperation, to my colleague Miss Irene Carlsen for help in correcting the manuscript, and, most of all, to my own teacher Professor Roman Jakobson of Harvard University both for the general leavening of ideas that he gives to all who study under him and for his help in criticising this manuscript. The faults are certainly all my own. Through an error transliterated Russian words in the body of the article sometimes show *mjagkij znak* as ′ (prime) instead of ’ (apostrophe).

[1] V. V. Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, Moscow, Leningrad, 1947, pp. 477 ff. See also André Mazon, "La notion morphologique de l'aspect chez les grammariens russes," *Mélanges offerts à Emile Picot*, Paris, 1913, I, 343-67 and Carl Göran Regnéll, *Über der Ursprung des slavischen Verbalaspektes*, Lund, 1944.

[2] Franz Miklosich, *Vergleichende Grammatik der slavischen Sprachen*, Heidelberg, 1926, IV, 274. Thus also Roman Jakobson, "Le signe zéro," *Mélanges Bally*, Geneva, 1939, pp. 145 ff, which supersedes in this respect his "Zur Struktur des russischen Verbums," *Charisteria Guilelmo Mathesio quinque genario*, Prague, 1932, 76.

[3] R. I. Avanesov and V. N. Sidorov, *Očerk grammatiki russkogo literaturnogo jazyka*, Moscow, 1943, I, 166-7.

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its completion, verbs in Russian are divided into classes called aspects. There are two such aspects: perfective and imperfective.

Verbs of the perfective aspect, denoting one process or another, express it as ended: *končit'*, *načat'*, *rešit'*, *postroit'*, *vytolkat'*, *proguljat'sja*. In contrast to them, verbs of the imperfective aspect denote the process without reference to its completion; *končat'*, *načinat'*, *rešat'*, *stroit'*, *vytalkivat'*, *progulivat'sja*. Thanks to the absence of indication as to the completion of the process, verbs of the imperfective aspect can express the process in its course, as developing in time: *on pisal, pišet pis'mo*. On the contrary, verbs of the perfective aspect, expressing the process in its completion, show this process only in the moment of the attainment of its goal or result in abstraction from its course: *on napisal, napišet pis'mo*. This distinction between verbs of the perfective and imperfective aspects is graphically shown, for example, in negative answers to a question such as: "A ty napisal pis'mo?" "Net, ne pisal," denies the very fact of the performance of the process, and, "Net, ne napisal," denies not the action but its result, that it has attained its goal: cf., for example, "Piši pis'mo," a stimulus aimed at the very performance of the action and, "napiši pis'mo," a stimulus directed not at the action, but at its result, etc. Verbs of the perfective and imperfective aspects present an analogous distinction in meaning in all their forms.

2. *The perfective introduces the concept of a term or limit in the action.* This view is expounded by Šaxmatov[4] as follows:

> An analysis of verbal forms from the point of view of their meaning shows that with many of them the representation of some sort of development of the action-condition, of some sort of movement of it, is combined more or less definitely as something concomitant. The evaluation of the development and movement of the action-conditon is produced by the speaker in dependence on those conditions in which the action-condition flows: the speaker can have in view either its continuing course or the fulness of its revelation in its beginning or end or in the result in general; further, he can have in view the momentary revelation of the action or the limitation of the action by certain intervals of time, or, finally the definiteness or indefiniteness of a given motion etc. Certain of such aspect categories have acquired a morphological expression, others are defined syntactically. All these categories are relative: the possibility of expressing the revelation of the fulness of the action in its beginning or end presupposes the possibility of expressing its customary course; the possibility of expressing the definiteness of a movement presupposes the possibility of expressing its indefiniteness also. As it is especially clear from the morphological means of implementation of aspects, they all fall into two basic aspects: the imperfective aspect and the

[4] A. A. Šaxmatov, *Russkij sintaksis*, Leningrad, 1941, 472. And so Holger Pedersen, *Russisk grammatik*, Copenhagen, 1916, 197, and more recently M. J. Holt, "Etudes d'aspect," *Acta Jullandica*, 1943, XV, nr 2, 29.

perfective aspect. The imperfective aspect denotes an ordinary, unqualified aspect-condition, the perfective aspect denotes the fulness of the revelation of the action-condition. Both these aspects can be called basic in respect to the other shadings. The morphological difference between them is expressed most sharply.

3. *The perfective represents action as a point.* Peškovskij[5] has been an advocate of the punctual viewpoint on the ground that it offers a satisfactory explanation of why perfective verbs can not be used in the infinitive with verbs meaning "begin," "continue," and "cease" and a satisfactory explanation of why the perfective aspect has no present tense.

"The category of aspect shows how the process denoted in the base of the verb flows past in time or is distributed in time." After defining the imperfective as linear or durative, he states, "The meaning of the perfective boils down to non-durativeness of the process."

There are many excellent grammarians who are in agreement with this concept, nor are they all, like de Saussure,[6] westerners under the influence of Brugmann. This was approximately the view of Katkov,[7] a Russian who wrote in 1845:

> Moreover, as we have seen, the present tense of these verbal types which, in connection with the quick and short conjugation, express the action in the very point of its completion has received the meaning of the future tense.

It is within this group that Vinogradov places Mazon. And, indeed Mazon proclaims adhesion to this view.[8] But his own final summary of what he conceives to be the nature of aspect is put in different terms:

> A. The imperfective aspect expresses either a single action which develops or a reiterated action.
>
> The determined imperfectives are more especially reserved for the expression of a single action, and the undetermined ones for the expression of a reiterated action.
>
> A′. The single action expressed by the imperfective aspect can be thought of by the speaker as setting in some way a question of principle and, hence, generalized.
>
> Again, the determined forms can express equally well a reiterated action under the proviso that inasmuch as the unity of action creates the impression of the unity of the act, the latter will appear as a single action conceived in its duration. The undetermined forms can of themselves express a single action, provided that the latter is by nature complex.
>
> B. The perfective aspect expresses a single action considered in its completion and hence in its result.

[5] A. M. Peškovskij, *Russkij sintaksis v naučnom osveščenii*, Moscow, pp. 95–99. And so Reinhold Trautmann, *Kurzgefasste russische Grammatik*, Leipzig, 1948.

[6] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de lingusitique générale*, Paris, 1922.

[7] Mixail Katkov, *Ob èlementax i formax slavjano-russkogo jazyka*, Moscow, 1845, 224.

[8] André Mazon, *Emplois des aspects du verbe russe*, Paris, 1914, 106, 239–40.

> The single action expressed by the perfective aspect can be an action that is, in reality, reiterated, but reduced to unity by the thought of the subject, the reduction to unity taking place either as a function of the concept of result (reduction to resultative unity) or by particularization: i.e., by illustration, with the help of a single example that is typical of a fact that is, in reality, frequent.

One should note that at least some of the upholders of the view that the perfective verb represents the action in a punctual form do not necessarily think that the action is abstracted in its end alone but agree that the point can also represent the beginning of the action.[9] Avanesov and Sidorov, as is obvious from their definition, while regarding the perfective aspect as denoting the completed act, also hold to some degree the punctual concept.

4. *The perfective indicates limitation in time.* This is Fortunatov's view.[10] He has formulated it as follows:

> In the Slavic perfective aspect the given phenomenon is denoted in relationship to a limited time (whether long or short) in its development while in the imperfective aspect a phenomenon is regarded without relationship to any limitation of time in its development.

5. *The perfective aspect expresses the result of the action.* The concept of result or the maintenance of result as the primary meaning of the perfective aspect has had advocates from Potebnja's time to the present day. Perhaps Karcevskij is the most important contemporary expounder of this view. He[11] states his position in the following way:

> ... The perfectivation of a process is nothing else than the concentration of our attention on one of the concrete moments of the process to the exclusion of all the others, whence arises the illusion that the perfective process has no duration, an illusion, we say, for every process necessarily has a certain duration. Whatever that moment may be: final (*spet'*), initial (*zapet'*) or other, it is subjectively felt as a resultative moment: in *on zapel* the act is entirely consummated as in *on spel*, since our attention is directed precisely on the point of departure of the process. The use of *stat'* to mark the beginning of a process that develops is altogether a different matter: *On stal rabotat'*, *my stanem pet'*. The fact that perfectivation operates as a func-

[9] For example, Mazon, *ibid.* 110-1, cf. Ėm. Černyj, *Ob otnošenii vidov russkogo glagola k grečeskim vremenam*, Saint Petersburg, 1877, where he defends the view that the perfective can represent "either the initial or final point of the line of development of the action."

[10] F. F. Fortunatov, *Otčët o dejatel'nosti Otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Akademii nauk za 1910*, 17. This, in turn, seems to form the basis of the view set forth by M. E. Koschmieder, *Zeitbezug und Sprache*, Leipzig, 1929, p. 35, and of Hans Christian Sørensen, *Aspect et temps en slave*, Aarhus, 1949. For a criticism of certain phases of Koschmieder's views, cf. E. Hermann, "Aspekt und Aktionsart," *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen aus dem Jahre 1932, philologisch-historische Klasse*, pp. 470–80.

[11] Serge Karcevski, *Système du verbe russe*, Prague, 1927, pp. 98–99.

> tion of the notion of result harmonizes with all the evidence of the so-called lexicological aspective couples such as *iskat'* (search) imperfective/*najti* (find) perfective (insofar as it is a synonym of *syskat'* or *otyskat'*); *lovit'* imperfective/*pojmat'* (catch) perfective; *govorit'* imperfective/*skazat'* (speak/say) perfective. The resultative moment makes one think precisely of a result, concrete and, so to speak, tangible, toward which the process tends and in which it ends, and it is naturally the direct object that first appears to the mind. The image to which a perfective verb corresponds frequently lets itself be expressed in other terms so as to allow the concrete result of the process appear. Thus *vyigrat'* means *priobresti nečto* just as *proigrat'* means *poterjat' nečto; vyxodit' bol'nogo* means *sdelat' ego zdorovym; ne ukaraulit'* means *ne ubereč'*, *upustit' nečto*, etc.

These five definitions represent the main tendencies in the description of the meaning of aspect. It is now time to indicate the criticisms that have been made of these theories.

As for the first theory, that the perfective represents the completed action, both Peškovskij[12] and Vinogradov[13] discard it on the ground that it does not explain such inceptive forms as *zabégat'* and *pojti*. Peškovskij[14] rejects the second theory, that the perfective is a characterized form that introduces the concept of the beginning or the end of the action, on the ground that its advocates mechanically combine different shades of meaning, expressed by prefixes, without giving a single general meaning. Vinogradov[15] rejects the third theory, that the perfective represents the action as a point, in indicating its failure to account for such perfective verbs as *poxodit'*, *pogovorit'* in their meaning of a temporally limited action. Roman Jakobson[16] has not only condemned the theory on that ground but also on the basis of such perfectives as *nagljadet'sja*. As for the fourth theory, that the perfective indicates limitation in time, Vinogradov[17] considers it to be "nearest of all to the truth" while Peškovskij[18] says of it:

> Others find in the perfective aspect "a limitation in time" of the development of the process, without qualifying to exactly what limits this limitation boils down. Thanks to this indefiniteness, they have succeeded in uniting such facts as *migal-mignul* where the restriction boils down to instantaneousness, and such as *govoril-pogovoril*, where the restriction boils down to a small, but nevertheless, protracted space of time. But we adjudge this limitation as too broad, since in such facts as *zagovarival-zagovoril*, *otzvanival-otzvonil*, a certain limitation in time is expressed both in the perfective and imperfective aspects in the prefixes.

[12] Peškovskij, *Russkij sintaksis*, 97.
[13] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 493.
[14] Peškovskij, *Russkij sintaksis*, 97.
[15] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 495–6.
[16] Professor Roman Jakobson during his course of lectures on Russian Syntax, Columbia University, 1947–8.
[17] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 496.
[18] Peškovskij, *Russkij sintaksis*, 97.

As for the theory that the perfective denotes result, both Vinogradov and Peškovskij find this definition attractive in many cases but agree that it can not be used to define all cases of the perfective. Peškovskij[19] notes that where this definition is defensible, it serves particularly well to join together the prefixed perfectives with the unprefixed ones. It is in connection with his discussion of this concept that Vinogradov[20] sets forth his own description:

> But in the idea of the imperfective aspect the basic sign appears to be the sign of the limit of the action, the attainment of the goal, the sign of the limiting or the removing of the concept of the protraction of the action.
>
> * * * * *
>
> The designation of the result appears to be one of the basic meanings of the perfective aspect, but not the only one. Even those linguists who stress the resultativeness of the perfective aspect do not deny that the basic function of the perfective aspect is the limitation or removal of the representation of the durativeness of the action, the concentration of the attention on one of the moments of the process as its limit. The designation of the action in its course, unconstrained by the thought of the limit of the process as a whole, is the basic meaning of the imperfective aspect. It appears as the "general meaning of the verb, its grammatical norm." Even in verbs of the imperfective aspect with the incohative prefixes (*zagovarivat'*, *zapevat'*, etc.) there is no indication of the limit of the *zagovarivanie* and *zapevanie*. Thus the imperfective aspect, denoting the "unqualified action-condition" (Šaxmatov), appears as the basis of the aspect relationship. The correlation of the aspects—perfective and imperfective—is expressed in this, that the Russian verb customarily represents a system of mutually connected forms, relating to the two parallel aspect series.

This, in brief outline, represents the most important views on the subject of the nature of the aspect contrast as between the perfective and imperfective, together with some of the criticisms and objections that have been made of them. Before attempting to assess them in greater detail, one would do well to consider the most basic problems that affect the answer.

BASIC PROBLEMS

The first problem that confronts anyone who wishes to discuss the problems of aspect in Russian is an obvious one: Is aspect in Russian a problem in grammar or in lexicography? It is a problem that lies in the spheres of both categories. It is apparently a problem in morphology and syntax, on the one hand, and in semantics, on the other. Formally, in by far the majority of its occurrences, the perfective stem is morphologically differentiated from the imperfective stem. Syntactically, the endings that serve for the present in the imperfective serve normally for the future in the perfective, the perfective does not normally form a present participle active or passive, the imperfective frequently

[19] *ibid.* For another criticism see Sørensen, *Aspect*, 170–1.
[20] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 497–8.

does not form a past passive participle, etc. The reader who is interested in a more detailed analysis of this phase of the problem would do well to read Šaxmatov's comments.[21] Semantically, the imperfective, which is not characterized in respect to the end of the action, may be contrasted with the perfective, which is so characterized, as the uncompleted or unsuccessful action with the completed or successful one: e.g., the often quoted example from Gercen, "Čto že delal Bel'tov v prodolženie ètix desjati let? Vsë ili počti vsë. Čto on sdelal? Ničego ili počti ničego." (What activities did Bel'tov engage in in the course of those ten years? Everything or nearly everything. What did he accomplish? Nothing or nearly nothing.) Again, the resultative coloring of the perfective can allow it to take on a more causative coloring than the imperfective. As Vinogradov[22] points out, while "Kto stroil ètot dom?" (who built that house?) shows direct participation in the activity, "Kto postroil ètot dom?" (who built that house?) can refer not only to the architect or builder but also to the person who ordered the house built. Finally, the perfective frequently tends to view an action in its minimal identifiable course while the imperfective may view it in its longer course; in other words, the perfective often concentrates the action, a matter that will be discussed in greater length later.

The second basic problem is that of the nature of the correlation between the perfective and imperfective forms. Are they two separate verbs or are they both forms of a single verb? Certain phases of this problem are bound up with the question of the unity of the perfective aspect: that is, Are there sub-aspects of the perfective? and, if so, Can two or more of these sub-aspects be correlated from a synchronic point of view with a single imperfective stem? This question will be explored at greater length later in the paper, but here it might be well simply to anticipate the answer as negative. Now if this initial concession is made for the time being, there seems to be no doubt that it is with two aspects of a single verb rather than with two verbs that we have to do. The arguments in favor of this concept are: in the first place, a substantial and productive group of verbs has a single form for both aspects: examples are verbs of the type of *velet'* (command), and of the types of *labializovat'* (labialize), and *militarizovat'* (to militarize).[23] The latter types seem to be productive ones. In the second place, as we have seen, the perfective and imperfective aspects are morphologically and syntactically supplementary. In the third place the semantic differences are the differences between two approaches to a single concept rather than two concepts. In the fourth place, the majority of verbs has both aspects: that is, though verbs defective in one aspect are by no means rare, they form exceptions to the rule rather than the rule. In the fifth place, the distinction between the two aspects is usually achieved by types of differentiation of stem (as in *rešat'-rešit'*,

[21] Šaxmatov, *Sintaksis*, 473–4.

[22] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 558.

[23] There are, in addition, verbs which can be used perfectively and imperfectively within a single stem while having a secondary, differentiated stem which is either perfective or imperfective only: e.g., *otvečat'* (both perfective and imperfective)—*otvetit'* (perfective only); *obrazovyvat'* (imperfective only)—*obrazovat'* (both perfective and imperfective).

ubivat'-ubit')[24] that can be paralleled in other parts of the conjugation of the verb or in the declension of the substantive.[25]

[24] It is not only that the number of defective verbs, in the sense of verbs that lack one aspect, is far from proportionately negligible as one can easily learn by checking the letters *l*, *m*, and *n* in D. N. Ušakov, *Tolkovyj slovar' russkogo jazyka*, Moscow, 1935–40, but the occurrence of such verbs in ordinary prose is extremely frequent. In compiling the following figures, I have taken Ušakov's correlations as authoritative. I have not counted the present tense forms of *byt'* where they were to be understood by context. I have, however, counted all participles and gerunds and included them in the list. The material on which I have based my figures is one thousand occurrences of verb forms in a short story by Aleksej Tolstoj, another thousand from two short stories of Konstantin Simonov, and a final thousand from V. V. Vinogradov's grammatical writings. In Tolstoy 207 imperfective forms lacked a linear perfective, 66 perfective forms lacked a linear imperfective. In Simonov 240 imperfective forms lacked a linear perfective, 25 perfective forms lacked a linear imperfective. In Vinogradov 185 imperfective forms lacked a linear perfective, 7 perfective forms lacked a linear imperfective. It should be noted, however, that if there were better cross referencing between imperfective and perfective forms of this type in Ušakov, these figures might be reduced by as much as ten percent.

In connection with the count mentioned in the preceding paragraph, I also analyzed those verbs which were complete in both aspect stems in respect to the manner in which the two stems were related to one another. In Tolstoj there were 528 occurrences of verbs, having two morphologically distinct stems and achieving this morphological differentiation by means of internal changes of stem: e.g., *rešat'-rešit'*, *ubivat'-ubit'* (116 of these occurrences were imperfective in aspect, 412 were perfective). There were 133 occurrences of verbs, having two morphologically distinct aspect stems and achieving this distinction by the addition of a prefix in the perfective aspect: e.g., *delat'-sdelat'* (69 of these occurrences were imperfective and 64 perfective). There were 64 occurrences of verbs having two morphologically distinct aspect stems and achieving this differentiation by some form of supplementation other than by use of prefixed forms of the simplex in the perfective stem: e.g., *govorit'-skazat'* (12 of these occurrences were imperfective, 52 perfective). There were 2 occurrences of verbs using a single stem both for perfective and imperfective: e.g., *velet'* (both examples were perfective).

In the selections from Simonov the count was as follows: There were 473 occurrences of verbs, having two morphologically distinct stems and achieving this through internal changes of stem (124 imperfective, 349 perfective). There were 130 occurrences of verbs, having two morphologically distinct stems and achieving this distinction by means of the addition of a prefix in the perfective stem (72 imperfective, 58 perfective). There were 107 verbs, having two morphologically distinct stems and achieving this distinction by some form of supplementation other than by use of prefixed forms of the simplex in the perfective (20 imperfective and 87 perfective). There were 25 verbs with morphologically identical stems for both aspects (2 imperfective, 23 perfective).

In the selections from Vinogradov the count was as follows: There were 637 occurrences of verbs, having two morphologically distinct stems and achieving this through internal changes of stem (347 imperfective and 290 perfective). There were 69 occurrences of verbs, having two morphologically distinct stems and achieving this distinction by means of the addition of a prefix in the perfective stem (58 perfective, 11 imperfective). There were 74 verbs, having two morphologically distinct stems and achieving this distinction by some form of supplementation other than by use of prefixed forms of the simplex in the perfective (32 imperfective, 42 perfective). There were 28 verbs with morphologically identical stems for both aspects (15 imperfective, 13 perfective).

These counts are based on too few data and insufficiently varied data to be used for anything other than the grossest general observations.

[25] The difference between, say, *ubivat'* and *ubit'* does not seem to be abnormal as com-

The third basic problem is this: What does the imperfective mean? The answer seems to be that it is, as Šaxmatov has said, a form that is unqualified. It can represent an action without reference to its beginning or end: for example, "On čital gazetu" (He was reading—*or*, he read—the paper). Here *čital* merely indicates the action of reading took place or was taking or used to take place. There is no inherent reference to a beginning or to an end of the action. Only the process is indicated. On the other hand the idea of the complete process is not necessarily denied. Take such examples, as the polite formula, "Vy čitali *Vojnu i mir*?" (You've read *War and Peace*?) In this case there is certainly no intimation that the reader has not finished the book, or is the type of person who does not normally complete books. The question avoids making an issue of the terminals of the action. Nor does "Sadites'" (Sit down) imply, of itself, an unterminated action. It simply does not state the action in reference to its termination.

At this point, with the proviso that it can be shown that the imperfective aspect has not a plurality of perfective aspects but a single aspect, we probably have enough tools available to show what the perfective aspect is.

THE UNITY OF THE PERFECTIVE ASPECT

Aspect is a general linguistic phenomenon that can convey any number of meanings or any number of combinations of meanings. It can express repetition of an action, duration of an action, commencement or termination of an action. This does not begin to exhaust the list of possible aspect relationships. Moreover, these differences in action can be shown in several ways. They can be shown by morphological changes in the stem or ending of the verb, they can be shown by particles or auxiliary verbs, they can be shown by separate words.

When a language shows these changes in a systematic fashion, that language is said to have aspect. Greek, for instance, is a language that shows aspect by means of morphological changes. The normal Greek verb has a stem for showing uncharacterized action, a stem for showing what Brugmann and his followers consider punctual action, a stem for showing completed action with, frequently, a resultative coloring. These stems are differentiated, in part, by reduplication, in part by ablaut, in part by changes in desinence. This system of three-fold aspect is characteristic of the typical Greek verb. There are defective verbs, of course, but most verbs show all three aspects. On the other hand, in Greek there is a morpheme *-sk-* that, in juncture with certain stems, can have an inchoative meaning: *boskō* "I am beginning to go" as contrasted with *baino* "I am going". If a sufficiently substantial number of Greek verbs had this alternation, one could regard this as a fourth aspect of the verb, but since this alternation occurs only sporadically, it is simpler to regard the forms in *-sk-* with this function[26] as separate words rather than as aspect forms of the words with which they are historically and etymologically connected.

pared with variations in stem length between the present and past stems of *prosit'* (*pros-it* as against *prosi-l*). Alternations of "soft" and "hard" are frequent enough within the present stem of, at least, such unproductive verbs as *nesti* (*nesu-nesēl*). Vowel alternations are a commonplace in the inflected endings of both nouns and verbs.

[26] In some cases the verb with the *-sk-* present is absorbed into the paradigm as a simple

In English aspect is normally shown through analytic means. Thus we get an uncharacterized "I go" as against "I am going" which is characterized as meaning the action in its course; as a third aspect, contrasting with both of these, we have "I have gone" denoting the action in its completion. (I am aware that the grammarian, whose views I most respect, defines the English perfect as denoting an action with its beginning completed). The ideas contained in the relationship between the English words "learn" and "know" or "get" and "have" could be expressed in some other language by a change in aspect, but in English they do not form part of an aspect system, but must be regarded simply as different words.

All of this is to say that in any specific language we must carefully differentiate what might be from what is, and what is systematic from what is sporadic and, most important of all, the synchronic from the historic.

In Russian though there may be sub-aspects of the imperfective, the imperfective as a whole forms one member of a binary contrast. The other member is the perfective. Though the semelfactive or momentary aspect is sometimes listed in Russian grammars as a third aspect, there is no possible justification for doing so. Morphologically and syntactically it shares the characteristics of the perfective. As for the question of whether there are sub-aspects of the perfective, the answer is not quite as immediate. Some excellent grammarians, including Ul'janov,[27] Fortunatov,[28] Šaxmatov[29] have proposed rather elaborate sub-aspect systems. Šaxmatov notes four: 1. the semelfactive, e.g., *stuknut'*, 2. the determinative, e.g., *posidet'*, 3. (with some doubt expressed) the incohative, e.g., *zaigrat'*, 4. (with some doubt expressed) the intensive, e.g., duplicated forms like *Už ja ego uvezu da uvezu* or the future perfective joined with forms such as *daj, davaj, nu-ka:* e.g., *daj posmotrju.* Though the fourth category seems merely whimsical as a sub-aspect, the others are well worth discussion. A system involving a series of contrasts between references to the beginning of the action as opposed to references to the end of the action—e.g., *zazvonit'* as opposed to *pozvonit'*—is a linguistically legitimate system; a system involving a series of contrasts between the action considered as durative (Šaxmatov's "determinative") as opposed to momentary (Šaxmatov's semelfactive)—*postučat'* as opposed to *stuknut'*—is equally legitimate. The only question is, Are such distinctions incorporated into the basic Russian aspect system?

AN ASPECT OPPOSITION BETWEEN THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF THE ACTION

The theory that there is a system of contrasts in Russian between the imperfective on one side with two perfectives on the other one having reference to the beginning of the action, the other to the end of the action, seems to be held either explicitly or implicitly by most writers on the Russian verb, including even many

present. The whole problem of the ingressive is discussed by Walter Porzig, "Zur Aktionsart indogermanischer Präsensbildungen, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 1927, XLV, 152-67.

[27] G. K. Ul'janov, *Značenija glagol'nyx osnov v litovskoslovjanskom jazyke*, Warsaw, 1891-5, 2 vols.

[28] Fortunatov, *Otčët.*

[29] Šaxmatov, *Sintaksis*, 474-6.

who deny such a belief. For as soon as one says that the perfective verb represents the full revelation of the action either in its beginning or its end, or that the perfective aspect represents the action with reference to one of its terminal points, etc., one has oposed *začertit'* (begin to sketch) to *čertit'* (sketch). Since *čertit'* has a perfective involving the second terminal *načertit'*, there must be a contrast within the perfective group as between incohative perfectives and perfectives with reference to the end of the act. Moreover when this contrast is shown to exist within the perfective for over five hundred verbs of relatively high frequency, it would seem inevitable that one must set up a sub-aspect for the contrast.

This is not the case for two reasons. *Začertit'* is not correlated with *čertit'* and *začertit'* is not an incohative verb. At this point, it would be well to consider the group of so-called inceptive verbs in detail since a proper understanding of them is basic for a proper understanding of the meaning of the perfective aspect as a whole.

Začertit' is a verb without a linear imperfective. It operates against the general concept of the perfective, against the concept as embodied in those words that are not defective in one of the aspects. Though *začertit'* lacks a linear imperfective other words of the same type do have them.

Of all the historically or etymologically inceptive group of words, the one prefixed by *za-* is the largest. It is not only a large group, but it is also a productive group. It is true that the number of verbs in this group that form linear perfectives is not large. If one counts the examples in Ušakov[30] from *zaalet'* through *zakutit'*, one will find that approximately one hundred and eighty seven of the verbs compounded with the prefix *za-* have a historically inceptive meaning. Of this group nineteen form linear imperfectives by means of the iterative or indefinite stem. They are *zabit'-zabivat'*, *zabit'sja-zabivat'sja*, *zabolet'-zabolevat'* (both homonyms), *zavesti-zavodit'* (in the sense of "begin to carry on"), *zavestis'-zavodit'sja* (in the sense of *načat' vodit'sja*), *zagnit'-zagnivat'*, *zagnoit'-zagnaivat'*, *zagnoit'sja-zagnaivat'sja*, *zagovorit'-zagovarivat'*, *zagoret'sja-zagorat'sja*, *zažat'-zažinat'*, *zažeč-zažigat'*, *zaznat'sja-zaznavat'sja* (in the sense of "begin to be proud," a somewhat doubtful member of the list since *znat'sja* does not, at least in contemporary Russian, have the meaning of "be proud"), *zakatat'-zakatyvat'*, *zakidat'-zakidyvat'*, *zakipet'-zakipat'*, *zakroit'-zakraivat'*, and *zakurit'-zakurivat'* (for part of the historically inceptive meanings). If the sampling is not faulty, the total number of inceptives with linear imperfectives is a little better than ten percent.

Another substantial group of historically inceptive verbs is that prefixed with *vz-* or *vs-*. Here the percentage of historically inceptive perfectives that forms linear imperfectives by means of the iterative or indefinite stem is considerably larger. It is only a little under fifty percent. We find such paired forms as *vzvarit'-vzvarivat'*, *vzvyt'-vzvyvat'*, *vzmolit'sja-vzmalivat'sja*, *vskipet'-vskipat'*, etc.

Another category of historically inceptive verbs is that of perfectives prefixed with *voz-* or *vos-*. In this group, which is an unproductive one, there are appar-

[30] Ušakov, *Tolkovyj slovar'*.

ently only nine inceptive forms. Even here *vosplamenit'* is matched with an imperfective *vosplamenjat'* (in the sense of "light" or "cause to begin to burn"). It should be noted, however, that the verbal element of the perfective member of the compound *plamenit'* does not exist as a simplex in modern literary Russian.

Another apparently unproductive category is that of historically inceptive verbs in *po-*. It is a fairly small group, consisting in part of perfective compounds with the determined members of the so-called determined-indetermined sub-aspects of the imperfective aspect, in part, of other verbs, mostly but not exclusively of motion: e.g., *poplestis'*, *poskakat'*, *počesat'*, *posypat'sja*, *poljubit'*. In this category it is difficult to find directly correlated imperfectives. However, it is possible that some do exist. *Polit'*, in the sense of "begin to pour," is listed by Ušakov as having the imperfective, *polivat'*. This may be an editorial oversight since *polit'sja* is listed as having no imperfective form in the inceptive sense. A less questionable example is *poznat'*, which has an imperfective aspect in *poznavat'*. The meaning of this word boils down to "get to know," and this seems to bear a clearly ingressive or inceptive relationship to *znat'*, in its customary meaning of "know". Hence, it offers no great variation from the pattern of relationship that exists between *poljubit'* and *ljubit'*.

Still another prefixed group of historically inceptive verbs is that formed by the prefix *u-*. It includes *uverovat'*[31] *widat'*, *widet'*, *ugljadet'*, *uslyšat'*, and *uznat'*. This list requires a little discussion. Ušakov, who, in general, has shown great tact and care in matching the perfective and imperfective aspects of the verbs in his lexicon, lists *widet'* as the perfective aspect of *videt'* and *uslyšat'* as the perfective aspect of *slyšat'*. This seems to be an error. Certainly, the meaning "get to see" or "get to hear" gives a much better sense in such sentences as, "Ja snačala uvidel i davno uže vižu, kakoj vy bessovestnyj čelovek" (I saw from the start and still see what an unscrupulous man you are), or, "Ona uvidela Ivana na uglu i pogovorila s nim" (She saw Ivan on the corner, and had a talk with him), or, "Mnogo vremeni prošlo, poka ja ne uslyšal, čto gaz vyxodit" (It was a long time before I noticed that gas was escaping). It further explains why Ušakov has recourse to *widet'* in defining *zametit'* and *uznat'*. It gives point to Mazon's observations[32] on the instantaneous nature of the action of *widet'* and *uslyšat'*. Finally, such a concept is in accord with Muller's[33] translations of the words. *Uvidat'* and *ugljadet'* are in this respect so closely connected with *widet'* that they require no further comment. *Uslyxat'* is equally closely connected with *uslyšat'*. *Uznat'* stands in roughly the same relationship with *znat'* as does *poznat'*. And in this case there is an imperfective aspect, *uznavat'*. This sort of relationship is, perhaps, better called incohative than inceptive.

This by no means exhausts the list; the historical inceptives and incohatives are very wide-spread among the prefixed forms of the verbs. Ul'janov[34] has noted,

[31] Cf., "Vot Solov'ëv—filosof, tak že, kak i ty, v molodosti neverujuščij byl, a potrudilsja i v boga uveroval . . . ," Aleksej Tolstoj, *Izbrannye proizvedenija*, Moscow? 1947, 12.

[32] Mazon, *Emplois*, 110.

[33] V. K. Müller, *Russian-English Dictionary*, New York, 1944.

[34] Ul'janov, *Značenija*.

for instance, the existence of incohatives in *pro-;* though some of his examples seem a little strained, there can be no serious objection to *prozrel'* in the sense of "become seeing" as against *zrel'*, "to see". *Prozrel'* has a linear imperfective aspect in *prozrevat'*.

The historically inceptive verbs, as a whole, are more frequently defective than not, but the very fact that some of them do have both aspects prevents any correlation of these forms with the simple, unprefixed verb. Synchronically, the relationship of these verbs with the simplex forms is a historical, etymological one. Semantically they have achieved independence. They do not describe the beginning of the action of a verb, they describe an action of their own, which may coincide with the beginning of the action of another verb. But for that matter, *polučit'* has a similar relationship with *imet'*. In this case no one would seriously classify *polučit'* as a perfective aspect of *imet'*, but synchronically there is really no better justification for classifying *zagovorit'* with *govorit'* functionally. *Zagovorit'* and its imperfective aspect *zagovarivat'* represent an independent word concept. That it may be simple and convenient from a lexicographical point of view to define this word in terms of *načat'-načinat' govorit'* is grammatically irrelevant.

This is no new doctrine, Mazon[35] has noted that *za-* in this sense is a meaningful prefix (préverbe plein), and Vinogradov has frequently pointed out the error of his predecessors in regarding perfectives in *za-* and *po-* in their incohative meaning as linear perfectives. Yet Mazon[36] states that the perfective can represent the beginning of the action, and Vinogradov[37] apparently rejects the concept that the perfective represents the completed action on the ground that:

> It is not difficult to note that this definition is in direct contradiction with the various shades of incohativeness that is proper to various compound prefixed verbs of the perfective aspect. The concept of completion must dialectically also be transferred to the beginning of the action, when it is a matter of verbs of the perfective aspect with incohative meaning such as: *zagovorit'*, *zaščelkat'*, *zasvistet'*, *pobežat'*, etc. .

Thus the old error goes on. Of course, *zagovorit'* represents a completed action in reference to *zagovarivat'*, and it represents a completed action in precisely the same way as *rešit'* represents a completed action in reference to *rešat'*. In verbs of this type the perfective aspect either operates against its proper linear imperfective aspect or, in the absence of such, against the general concept of perfectivity.

Now this does not mean that the perfective aspect does not have any reference to the beginning of the action of the verb. We shall see later that it does. This means that the perfective does not have the meaning of "begin something" in contrast to "finish something."

[35] Mazon, *Emplois*, 110.
[36] *ibid.*
[37] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 493.

THE DURATION OF THE PERFECTIVE VERB AND THE QUESTION OF SUB-ASPECTS

The question of the durative quality of perfective verbs is one about which an almost incredibly large literature exists. The quantity of literature is scarcely surprising since the solution to it is closely related to solution of the problem, whether the perfective is punctual and of the problem, whether there are sub-aspects of the perfective aspect. Now, even those people who defend the theory that the Russian perfective verb is punctual admit to acute embarrassment in attempting to explain away such a type as *pogovorit'* in the sense of "talk a while." Mazon[38] states that, while it is not a point, it may be explained as a circle. Peškovskij[39] discusses it as a stumbling block, but states that other factors still make the "linear-punctual" concept of aspect the most satisfactory definition. Verbs in the perfective aspect that denote extension in time are by no means limited to those prefixed by *po-*. There are the reflexives, prefixed by *na-* in the sense of "do something to satiety,"[40] there are those in *vy-* with a similar meaning.[41] There are verbs of perfective aspect in *pro-* in their sense of "do something for a certain time." There are many other types of verb with a clear reference to duration, which no amount of casuistry can obliterate. For instance, Vinogradov[42] tells of an attempt of Peškovskij's to explain away such an example as, "Ona prosidela vsju noč' u materi," by claiming that "vsju noč'" is the direct object of the verb rather than an indicator of the verb's duration. It would be extremely interesting to know how he would explain such instances as, "Vsju noč' s bol'nym provozilsja,"[43] since the basic meaning of the reflexive verb seems to be intransitivity, or, "Nado ponosit' pal'to eščë odin sezon," where there are two accusatives to contend with, or, "Ona dolgo prosidela tam," where we are dealing with an adverb of time. It seems to be pointless, in the face of such evidence to deny that the perfective verb can express duration of time.

Now comes a second question concerning sub-aspects of the perfective. Different scholars state the problem in different ways and offer different solutions, but, basically, what binds all the statements and solutions together, is this: Since some verbs of the perfective aspect denote instantaneous action, the grammarians say, and since others denote non-instantaneous action, should not the verbs of the perfective aspect be divided into two classes, one for each type? At times more than one sub-aspect is set up,[44] but the instantaneous as against the durative is perhaps the most attractive.

In the matter of the perfective aspect of specifically what verbs one finds an instantaneous meaning and of specifically what verbs a durative one there is some disagreement. Usually the examples have as the non-durative member one

[38] Mazon, *Emplois*, 112.
[39] Peškovskij, *Russkij sintaksis*, 99.
[40] Cf. *nagljadet'sja*.
[41] Cf. *vyležat'sja*.
[42] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 496.
[43] This and the following example are from Ušakov, *Tolkovyj slovar'*.
[44] Ul'janov, Fortunatov, and Šaxmatov set up more elaborate systems.

of the perfective forms ending in *-nut'* and a durative member of the type of *pogovorit'*.

The group of perfective verb forms with an infinitive in *-nut'* is variously labeled as "semelfactive" (odnokratnyj), "instantaneous" (mgnovennyj), or "momentary" (momental'nyj). An example which is listed by Vinogradov[45] as having a clearly momentary or semelfactive meaning is *xlebnut'*. Ušakov, who in his lexicon differentiates perfectives in general from semelfactives, agrees that this example is semelfactive, and one may define it as meaning "eat (a liquid) by taking a sip or a spoonful," while one may define *poxlebat'*, which, fortunately, also exists, as "eat a liquid by sipping or spooning it over a period of time." Now if *xlebnut'* denotes a momentary action while *pokhlebat'* denotes an action or group of actions taking place over a period of time, and both of these forms can be regarded as varying aspect contrasts to a single imperfective, then we are obviously confronted by a matter of considerable importance.[46] However, as has been stated before in this paper, this is apparently not the case.

In the first place, *poxlebat'* is best regarded as an independent verb, defective in the imperfective aspect. The reasons for not regarding it as linear with *xlebat'* are several. To begin with, it is morphologically asymmetrical. Next, while we have seen that aspect contrasts, in the general sense of perfective as against imperfective, are, in the vast majority of cases, shown by a change in the stem of the verb and only supplementarily by the addition of a prefix, the group of verb aspect forms in *po-* with the meaning of "perform the action denoted by the unprefixed form for a while" obviously never appears without prefix. Moreover, it would appear to be oddly asymmetrical for a contrast to be shown by a special prefix in one member and a special suffix in the other member. Again, even in those verbs that do form linear perfectives by means of prefixed forms, perfectivity is shown by various semantically empty prefixes, but here a single prefix functions with a single readily definable meaning, and since this is the case, the prefix can not be regarded as semantically empty. If the prefix is meaningful, then it apparently serves to create a new word rather than a new aspect of a single word.

But more important than arguments of this type is the fact that verbs like *poxlebat'*, while usually defective in respect to a linear imperfective stem, are not always lacking in one. Ušakov, who, in general, carefully distinguishes between non-linear forms such as *potaskivat'* (a verb lacking a perfective stem and meaning "drag from time to time") and *potaskat'* (a verb lacking an imperfective stem and meaning "drag a while,") regards the following verbs as having linear imperfectives: *polit'* (pour a while)-*polivat'*, *pokoptet'* (diffuse a certain amount of soot for a certain time)-*pokapčivat'*, *pokoptit'* (smoke a while)-*pokapčivat'*, *požeč'* (spend some time in burning down or destroying something)-*požigat'*, *počžit'sja* (spend some time shrinking)-*počživat'sja pogromyxat'* (rumble a while)-*pogromyxivat'*, *pogroxotat'* (rumble a while)-*pogroxatyvat'*, *podavit'* (press a while)-*podav-*

[45] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 527.

[46] I note with interest that Sørensen sets up such a sub-aspect system in his *Aspect*, 94 ff.

livat', *povizžat'* (scream a while)-*povizgivat'*, *poviljat'* (wave a while)-*povilivat'*, *podërgat'* (pull out for a while)-*podërgivat'*, *pogoret'* (burn a while)-*pogorat'*, *poževat'* (chew a while)-*požëvyvat'*, *pokolot'* (stab a while)-*pokalyvat'*. Hence, what we have here is the same thing that we had in the case of verbs compounded with *za-* in the historically incohative sense: a group of verbs whose only connection with the simplex forms is a historical one, a group of independent verbs.

It is worth noting that though there are, at a rough estimate, over 1200 perfectives, compounded with the prefix *po-* and having the meaning of "do something or other for a while," only about 100 of them are formed from verbal stems that have a perfective in *-nut'*. Only about 150 additional ones of them are formed from verbs to which Ušakov attributes any sort of linear perfective form (exclusive of those in *-nut'*). As far as the contemporary language is concerned, these verbs seem to have been formed mainly by the prefixing of imperfectives of a type which does not lend itself readily to the formation of linear perfectives: words denoting actions that have no natural climax, nothing to which they build: cf. *sidet'*, *stojat'*, *xodit'* etc.

It is equally true of the other verbs that denote a protracted action such as *nagljadet'sja* and *prosidet'*. These too are independent of the simplex. For instance, *napit'sja* has as its own imperfective aspect, *napivat'sja*, *promolčat'* has as its, *promalčivat'*. None of these types of verbs has more than a historical-etymological relationship to the uncompounded imperfectives. They are simply perfective verbs that operate against their own proper imperfectives or, in the event no linear perfective exists, against the general concept of imperfectivity.

This destroys the concept of two types of perfectives, two sub-aspects of the perfective (one durative and one momentary) operating against a single imperfective. But it does not dispose of other questions connected with the semelfactive. Does the semelfactive represent a special type of perfective? Apparently not. Formally the *-nut'* ending is used both by imperfective and perfective verbs. As an imperfective suffix it apparently generally functions in the meaning of 'reach a state" or "become" e.g., *vjanut'* (become withered). As a perfective suffix it is generally thought of as denoting a single momentary action. This concept, however, of the perfective function is difficult to defend in detail. In the first place, it is generally agreed that many unprefixed perfectives in *-nut'* have lost the semelfactive or momentary significance, and have become simply ordinary perfectives.[47] As for those which are thought still to retain their old specialized meaning, though the consensus of opinion seems to be that such ones do exist, apparently there is little or no agreement among scholars as to just which specific ones these are. There are only a limited number of instances in which the perfectives in *-nut'* that Šaxmatov[48] lists as semelfactive are so accepted by Ušakov in his lexicon. Even the examples that Vinogradov[49] gives are not all regarded as semelfactives by Ušakov, a more surprizing situation in

[47] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 526–7, and Ušakov, *Tolkovyj slovar'*, under various entries.
[48] Šaxmatov, *Sintaksis*, 475.
[49] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 526–7.

view of Vinogradov's collaboration in the Ušakov dictionary. However, the latter two are in agreement at least as far as the following list is concerned: *kivnuť* (nod), *kačnuť* (rock), *iknuť* (hiccup), and *kol'nuť* (prick). Now if these verbs have maintained themselves as semelfactives while *stuknuť*, as one example out of many, has become a simple perfective, uncharacterized by any special semelfactiveness or momentariness, then the first and most important conclusion that we must draw is the following one: the semelfactives in *-nuť* are not morphologically differentiated from other perfective verbs. It might be well to take one of the examples from this special semelfactive list and examine it closely. The verb, *kol'nuť*, will serve well enough. When one says, "Mužčina kol'nul porosënka" (The man stabbed the pig), it is true that one means the man stabbed the pig once. But this does not set such verbs off from other perfectives. If one says, "Mužčina udaril devušku" (The man struck the girl), this means that the man struck the girl once. Hence the meaning of a single act is proper to a perfective verb with another ending than *-nuť*. Next consider such a sentence as, "Mužčina kol'nul porosënka četyre raza" (The man stabbed the pig four times). Here the act is not single, but manifold. It is true the sense of more blows than one is shown only because of special contextual conditions. One may argue with some justice that what one is faced with in this case is a matter of four single separate blows. But despite that, the essential fact is that the verb, *kol'nuť*, shows no resistance to being combined with *četyre raza*, and in this again demonstrates its semantic-aspective kinship with verbs that do not end in *-nuť* such as *udarit'*. One can say, "Mužčina kol'nul každogo iz ètix porosjat i ubežal" (The man stabbed each of the pigs and ran away). Here a definite but unspecified number of stabbings takes place. No doubt the wounds are dealt, only one to a pig, but the important point is that in this matter again we find a parallel, exact in detail, with the verb *udarit'*.

Now what of the momentary quality of these verbs? It is true that an efficient assailant, working under favorable conditions, can stab or prick with considerable rapidity, but it seems equally true that an equally efficient assailant under equally favorable circumstances, can strike with at least equal speed. But even if we grant that most of the acts shown by verbs in *-nuť* can be performed in a short time, we have still failed to show two things. One is that these verbs differ essentially from other perfective verbs like *udarit'*, the other is that verbs of this type are instantaneous, for a short duration of time and a point of time are two entirely different concepts. A point of time is completely without duration.

Now *kol'nuť*, in this respect is a slightly less easy example to deal with than *šagnuť*, another verb that Ušakov lists as semelfactive, because the latter involves a rather simpler set of motions. *Šagat'-šagnuť* are two aspects of a verb, meaning "step." Now the general concept of "step" is that of lifting one foot from the ground and bringing it forward until it is placed in advance of the other foot. If the perfective shows this action in its entirety, then the perfective must have duration since it requires time to take a step. The counter-argument would be that the perfective doesn't include the full course of the step, but only the moment of the completion of the step. We have already mentioned this

view of the perfective, not in reference to a specific group of verbs, but as a general explanation of the force of the perfective. There we noted that the standard objection made to it is that it does not account for verbs of the type of *pogovorit'*. This objection seems to be an insurmountable one, but can we say that momentariness in any strict sense is the explanation of the semelfactive forms and of other perfectives with a less manifest durative force (such as *sdelat'*, *pozvonit'*, *udarit'*)? Even here such an explanation doesn't work. There are several facts that can not be explained if one takes the perfective as punctual. In the first place, if the verb is shown in the moment of its completion, how can it be modified by adverbs like *bystro* or *medlenno* in such instances as, "On bystro šagnul čerez porog," or, "On medlenno šagnul čerez porog?" Such adverbs make sense only when they modify the course of the action rather than the point of completion. In the second place, if the perfective represented the point of completion of the act, then it would be impossible for such forms as *pobrit'* (shave) and *otbrit'* (finish shaving) to arise and exist as semantically differentiated terms. The end point of the shaving and the end point of the end of the shaving would become fused. In fact, however, they are differentiated, and, while *pobrit'* serves as a linear perfective to *brit'*, *otbrit'* has gained an imperfective of its own, *otbrivat'*. It would seem that neither the so-called semelfactive nor any other group of verbs *per se* denotes instantaneous action.

If verbs such as *kol'nut'* and *šagnut'* are not instantaneous, what are they then in relation to such forms as *kolot'* and *šagat'*? The best answer in these specific cases seems to be that they are linear perfectives of the latter verbs, or, at least, of a group of meanings of these verbs. The matching of forms seems to offer no difficulty in the case of *kol'nut* save for the fact the imperfective has a few meanings not paralleled by the perfective. In the case of *šagnut'*, it is worth while to examine the relationship in some detail. *Šagat'*, according to Ušakov has the following meanings: 1. march, 2. to go (in the sense of both *idti* and *xodit'*), 3. to move forward in developing, 4. to step over; *šagnut'* is defined simply as the semelfactive of *šagat'*. Now, let us grant that *šagat'* does not make much sense as the imperfective of *šagnut'*, when one looks from these definitions of *šagat'* toward those of *šagnut'*, which, after all, means "take a step" or "step." But suppose we reverse our point of view, suppose we look from *šagnut'* toward *šagat'*, what then? The relationship immediately becomes understandable. *Šagnut'* means "take a step." *Šagat'* in such a sentence as, "Kogda on šagal čerez porog, on uslyšal, čto telefon pozvonil," is manifestly the durative of the imperfective of *šagnut'*, while *šagat'* in the sense of "march" or "go" represents an iterative form of *šagnut'*. *Šagat'* in the sense of "move forward in developing" seems to be simply figurative use of the latter meaning. Now, taken from this point of view, *šagnut'* seems to offer no special feature as a perfective. The use of *šagat'* in the sense of *xodit'* is merely a sort of multiplication of the iterative sense that we have already seen in its equivalence to *idti*. But suppose the sense of *idti* gradually gets an independence of its own, and the imperfective is conceived of as "go" rather than "step." Might it not form a new perfective of itself in this sense?

As a matter of fact this has not happened in the case of the simplex, *šagat'*, and seems to have happened rarely[60] in the case of the correlated imperfective forms of other so-called semelfactive verbs. *Pošagat'*, for instance, fails to qualify for reasons already outlined, and, in addition, "step a while" could hardly be regarded as a linear perfective for the meaning of "go". But in the compound forms we apparently do get examples, where both the simple imperfective and the so-called semelfactive become prefixed with the same prefix and become correlated with a single imperfective form. Thus we get relationships such as: *vybaltyvat'* (reveal, blab), an imperfective, with one perfective in *vyboltat'* and another perfective in *vyboltnut'*; *vydërgivat'* (pull out) with one perfective in *vydergat'* and another perfective in *vydernut'*, *vyšagivat'* with one imperfective in *vyšagat'* (to step forth) and another in *vyšagnut'* (to take a step forth). Vinogradov and Ušakov both agree concerning the first two examples that *vyboltat'* (blab) represents a series action as compared to *vyboltnut'* (blab) as a unit action. As examples Ušakov gives "On vyboltal vse našy sekrety" (He blabbed all our secrets), and, "Slučajno vyboltnul sekret" (He accidentally blabbed the secret). While my informants are in agreement with Ušakov and Vinogradov on the general theoretical point, when it comes to practical usage, some of them tend to employ the two perfective forms interchangeably. Only a large number of examples from contemporary literary sources could do much toward answering the question, To what degree the difference is real and widely observed and to what degree it has ceased to exist as a living force? Against a belief in strict observance is the fact that *-nut'* forms not infrequently lose the meaning of doing something once when compounded: cf. *prikol'nut'* (spur a little), *peremaxnut'sja* (signal to one another with flags) and many others. However, the difference between the compounded form in *-nut'* and the other compounded perfective form frequently is of a much deeper semantic nature. For instance, in the case of *vyšagivat'*, the two perfectives have quite different uses. *Vyšagat'* means "pace off a certain distance," while *vyšagnut'* means "stick out the foot" and is apparently used chiefly, or only, in connection with gymnastic exercises. In this case, of course, the words are separated so widely that there can scarcely be any tendency for the two perfectives to become confused. This sort of full semantic differentiation is quite frequent. Other examples are: *perešvyrivat'* which serves as an imperfective both to *perešvyrjat'*, meaning "hurl out all or much of something," and to *perešvyrnut'*, meaning "hurl through something," *vyxlëstyvat'* which serves as an imperfective both to *vyxlesnut'*, meaning "knock out by whipping," "empty at one stroke," and to *vyxlestat'*, meaning "lash," "drink-up, empty," and *dokidyvat'* which serves as an imperfective both to *dokinut'*, meaning "throw somewhere," and *dokidat'*, meaning "finish throwing something." In these cases, certainly, the words no longer have more than an etymological connection with one another. This same type of semantic differentiation

[60] Perhaps, *rezat'* offers an example. See Ušakov under *rezat'* and *reznut'*. My informants tend not to use *reznut'* at all. As for *pugat'* as against *ispugat'* and *pugnut'*, Ušakov simply describes it as serving as an imperfective to both.

at times takes place between the uncompounded forms. And in these cases again we are dealing with words that have only a historical relationship.

In general, differences such as we find between *dokidat'* and *dokinut'*, are substantial enough not to wear off in general use. But where such strong semantic differentiations do not exist, where the difference lies in a subtlety as in the case of *vydergat'/vydernut'*, there is a tendency, if one may judge from the usage of my informants, for the two perfectives to become mere synonyms though one of my informants tells me it is impossible to say *vydergat' odin volos*. Even Ušakov does not differentiate in some cases between such forms. For example, see his entries under *prigljadet'* and *prigljanut'*, both with the meaning of "look attentively."

The so-called semelfactives have been examined at some length in order to show that the perfective is a unified group rather than a differentiated one as far as aspect is concerned: i.e., that it is not divided into sub-aspects. At this point, for the sake of completeness, we should probably examine Miklosich's doctrine of characterized and uncharacterized perfectives.

Miklosich[61] observes that all perfective verbs can be divided into two basic types as far as the length of their action is concerned:

> Perfective verbs denote the completion either without thought of the length of the action: *kupiti* (buy) in one or more acts (an uncharacterized perfective), or with thought of the length of the action.

The latter types he divides into instantaneous as opposed to durative perfectives and iterative perfectives.

In this observation Miklosich is speaking of Slavic in general and using non-Russian examples. In Russian, at any rate, it is extremely doubtful that the system, as he outlines it, can be thought of as having any particular application to aspect proper. Before one can examine these subdivisions in any sort of true perspective, one must find a tenable point of view from which to do so.

THE MODIFIER AND THE MODIFIED

The verb functionally must not be regarded as something that can be isolated from the remainder of the sentence. The verb within the sentence has various relationships. These relationships fall into two general classes: the inward-looking relationships of the verb, that is, the connections that exist between the verb and its nominal objects, whether direct or indirect, and the adverbs that modify it, whether the adverbs are in the form of words, phrases, or clauses; and the outward-looking relationships of the verb, that is, the relationship of the verb to its subject and to other verbs toward which it has an adverbial relationship when it functions as the verb of a dependent adverbial clause or as a dependent infinitive.

Various characteristics of the verb also display directivity. To take a relatively simple example, voice is a relationship that exists solely between the verb and those parts of speech toward which the verb maintains an outward (modify-

[61] Franz Miklosich, *Vergleichende*, 279–80.

ing) relationship. As far as the parts of the sentence that are dependent on the verb are concerned, an intransitive verb does not differ appreciably from a passive transitive verb.[82] On the other hand transitivity concerns only the relationship between the verb and the words that it modifies since as far as the subject is concerned the verb is indivisible in meaning from the words that modify the verb.

How does aspect fit into this scheme? Apparently aspect is a quality that operates in both directions. As far as the verb in its inward-looking (modified) function is concerned, aspect determines whether the verb is characterized as being shown in its full development or uncharacterized in this respect. The perfective is characterized as the verb in its full course while the imperfective is uncharacterized in respect to fulness of course. The factor of the fulness of the revelation of the action is not one that can be thought of as a matter that concerns exclusively the relationship between the subject and the verb but it is one that can be thought of as concerning exclusively that between the verb and its modifiers. In such a sentence as "On bystro vyxodil iz goroda, kogda dožd' pošël" (He was rapidly walking out of town when the rain started), we are shown an activity that was taking place in a certain manner at the moment that something else had happened. There is no intimation as to whether the subject ever left town. There is no intimation, that, even if he did leave town, he walked the whole way rapidly. Hence we can not think of the imperfective aspect here as segmenting an action in its relationship with the subject. Moreover the particular temporal point of bisection in this case would be determined by the verbal modifier "kogda dožd' pošël" (when the rain started). On the other hand, the whole aspect relationship in respect to completeness can be looked upon as entirely located in the juncture of the verb and its modifiers without reference to the juncture between subject and verb. In the perfective version: "On vyšel iz goroda, kogda dožd' pošël" (He left town when the rain began), the relationships within the verbal phrase have changed considerably. In the first place the departure is vouched for. Next, the time relationship between the coming of the rain and the departure is revised (we shall speak at greater length of the relative tense relationship later). Finally the subject's relationship to these factors has changed in the process. But from the subject's point of view the change does not lie in its relationship with the verb alone, but with the verbal

[82] I am inclined to believe that this statement is true in spite of the apparent outward directivity of the instrumental when it serves to denote agent in a passive construction. The agent seems to be only one form of instrument; at least, I am incapable of sensing any real difference between the directional force of *im* in such a sentence as "Ja dovolen im" and such a one as "Ja vozmuščën im." (My informants regard the former construction as permissible). Instrument and agent are indistinguishable in such examples as, "Ego ubilo električestvom," in view of the permissability of, "Ego ubilo električestvo." In this connection, consider the sentence, "Ty obvinjaeš'sja mnoju v tom-to" (Šaxmatvo, *Sintaksis*, 479). Or, again, if such directivity is attributed to the instrumental of agent, then why not the same directivity to the dative in such a sentence as, "Mne xotelos' byt' s vami?" Cf. Roman Jakobson, "Beitrag zur allgemeinen Kasuslehre," *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague*, 1936, VI, 240-88.

phrase as a whole. Again, the sentence, "on ubival ženu" (He was killing his wife) does not merely imply doubt that the subject performed the full action, but implies doubt that the object was fully acted upon. That is to say, there is not only doubt that he killed but doubt that she was killed. Now the doubt that he killed does not necessarily imply doubt that she was killed, but doubt that she was killed decidedly does show doubt that he killed her. In this case again it is in the relationship between the verb and its modifiers that we get the true picture of the aspect force of the perfective in respect to the completeness of the action.

The perfective shows the course of the action through its beginning, middle and end. "On bystro rešil vopros" (He quickly solved the question) must show the entire action since *bystro* characterizes the full course of the action. The imperfective is free to isolate any point or any segment in the course of the verb. In the sentence "On bystro vyxodil iz goroda, kogda dožd' pošël," as we have seen, we are given a point of action. There is no indication of any relationship to the beginning or the end of the action. The action may have been starting or may have been ending or may have been at any part of its development at the moment that the rain began.

Next let us consider the modifying or outward-looking relationship of the verb in respect to aspect. Does aspect affect the relationship between the subject and predicate directly? It does. The perfective aspect denotes that the subject performs the action shown in the verbal phrase a single time while the imperfective aspect does not characterize the number of times that the subject performs the action. "Verbal phrase" is used here to describe the verb in its modified form. The verbal phrase may consist of a verb with objects and adverbs or it may consist of the verb alone.

Thus, "On šagnul" (He stepped once) consists of a subject and a verbal phrase, which, in this instance, happens to be identical with the verb. Here the perfective aspect characterizes the subject as performing the complete action of the verb, *šagat'-šagnut'*, once. Since the basic meaning of this verb is "take a step," this in the absence of modifiers is also the meaning of the verbal phrase. Since the subject performs the action once, the result is that the subject is shown as completing a single step. But in the sentence, "On šagnul tri raza" (He stepped three times), the verbal phrase is not identical with the verb. The verbal phrase consists of the verb plus an adverbial phrase, *tri raza*, and it is the phrase rather than the verb that the perfective aspect shows that the subject performed once. On the other hand, "On ostorožno šagal čerez porog" (He was stepping carefully across the threshold *or* he used to step carefully across the threshold) does not indicate the number of times that the subject performs the act denoted by the verbal phrase.

Thus again, "On pročital knigu" (He read the book) shows that the subject performs the complete action once. The complete action consists of the verbal phrase *pročital knigu*. "On čital (*or* pročityval) knigu" does not imply the number of times the reading took place. "On pročital neskol'ko knig" (He read several books) indicates that the action shown in the verbal phrase, *pročital neskol'ko*

knig, was done once. "On čital (or pročityval) neskol'ko knig" does not of itself show whether the action was single or repeated.

The characterization in respect to semelfactiveness is obviously one between subject and verbal phrase and not between verb and predicate modifiers. In the first place, if it were a relationship between the verb and its predicate modifiers, such a phrase as *šagnul tri raza* (stepped three times) would be a monstrosity. In the second place, it is not the verb, but the verbal phrase which the aspect shows as semelfactive.

Under certain conditions verbs of the perfective aspect can lose this subjective characterization of semelfactiveness. This loss can take place when the present perfective is drawn out of its usual tense relationship (that of the future) and is used to denote a time of action that, in general, approximates that of the present of the imperfective aspect, whether in the timeless or in the historical sense of the latter). Consider the following examples:

"Vy vsegda isportite! (You always spoil things!).

"Inogda tak zanesëš'sja, zanesëš'sja, daže vskrikneš' " (Sometimes you get so carried away, you even cry out).

"Sila vsegda svoë voz'met (Might always has its way).

"Tol'ko vot beda moja: slučaetsja, celaja nedelja projdët, a ja ne zasnu ni razu" (Just consider my misfortune: sometimes, a whole week passes without my falling asleep once).

"I tak neskol'ko raz povtorjalos': to popljašut, to otdoxnut pod grušej . . . ." (And so it was repeated several times: now they would dance, now they would rest under the pear tree . . .).

"Vstanu ja, byvalo, rano . . . (I would sometimes get up early . . .).[53]

I can not document this loss of the subjective semelfactive characteristic of the perfective outside of this atypical use of the present perfective.

Some words and phrases are by their semantic nature precluded from being joined with the perfective aspect except when it has lost it semelfactive quality under the conditions outlined above. Such, for example are: *často* (frequently), *vsegda* (always), *obyčno* (customarily), *obyknovenno* (usually), *každyj den'* (every day), *každyj raz* (every time), etc. The reason for this is not immediately apparent. It is not exactly because these words represent an indefinite number of times, for *neskol'ko raz* (several times), which is certainly indefinite by any strict definition, can be construed with the perfective; it is not precisely that these words indicate a large indefinite number of times, for, though the gram-

[53] The examples in this group are all taken from Mazon, *Emplois*, 142-6. Compare the other examples under this heading where the present perfective is employed in its normal use as a future and also compare the examples of what Mazon labels as "action réitérée ramenée à l'unité" under the perfective preterite. (In the latter section, incidentally, the example employing *ispovedalsja* should not have been included since this form can serve either as a perfective or an imperfective.) The examples all appear to support the contention that the predicate phrase employing the perfective aspect can lose its semelfactive relationship when removed from its normal tense function. These examples are quite a different matter from such particularized perfectives as, "Naše delo torgovoe, kupeckoe; naše delo kupit'."

marian I. M. Pul'kina[54] states *mnogo raz* (many times) can be construed only with the imperfective, the majority of my informants agree that sentences combining *mnogo raz* with the perfective are permissable in Russian. In the case of *mnogo raz*, the analogy with *neskol'ko raz* would, under any circumstance, tend to exert considerable pressure. As the matter stands, one is forced to fall back on some such rule as the following: certain adverbs and adverbial phrases can not be incorporated into the concept of a completed action with a beginning, middle and end. Since they can not be combined into the predicate phrase, they conflict with the semelfactive relationship between the verbal predicate and the subject. Hence such adverbs and adverbial phrases can be used with the perfective only when its semelfactive characterization is lost as in the examples above.

Aspect, aside from being able to determine the completeness of an act and the semelfactiveness of the subject's performance, can also determine the relative chronology of verbs that are syntactically linked together. In the absence of certain indications to the contrary, in a modifying clause or phrase the imperfective aspect, representing action uncharacterized in respect to a beginning or an end, tends simply to align itself with the time of the main verb, as synchronous to it. Thus if both the verb in the subordinate clause or phrase and the verb in the main clause are imperfective the typical pattern tends to be:

"Kogda on ssorilsja s ženoj, on ne znal predela" (When he quarreled with his wife, he lost his sense of proportion).

"Poka ona prigotovljala obed, on čital knigu" (While she was preparing dinner, he was reading a book).

"On slyšal, kak baba branit prikažčika" *or* "On slyšal, kak baba branila prikazčika" (He heard how the huzzy was scolding the clerk).

"Esli ja budu v Moskve, ja budu rad povidat'sja s vami" (If I am in Moscow, I shall be glad to see you).

"Xotja on ničego ne znaet, on očen' mnogo govorit" (Though he knows nothing, he talks a lot).

"Idja v gorod, on ustaët" (While walking to town, he grows weary).

But the subordinate imperfective verb is by no means limited to a synchronic relationship with the imperfective verb in the main clause. It can denote prior time. This is particularly true in statements of repeated action. Here the imperfective in the subordinate clause can show an action that occurs prior to each repetition of the action denoted by the main verb.

"Kogda on vstaët s posteli, on umyvaetsja" (When he gets up out of bed, he washes).

"Xotja pticy i vzletajut vysoko v nebo, oni vsegda vozvraščajutsja na zemlju" (Though birds fly high up into the air, they always return to earth).

"Zasiživajas' za čteniem celymi večerami, on progulivalsja pered snom" (When he sat reading for whole evenings, he would take a walk before going to sleep).

However a single action can be referred to.

[54] I. M. Pul'kina, *Kratkij spravočnik po russkoj grammatike*, Moscow, 1949, 161.

'Xotja ona rabotala tjaželo ves' den', segodnja vozvraščajas' domoj, ona pela" (Although she had worked hard all day, she sang today as she returned home).

"Otpiraja dver', on vdrug vidit neznakomogo" (Opening the door, he suddenly sees an unknown man).

When a verb is used in the imperfective aspect in the subordinate clause or phrase, and a verb is used in the perfective in the main clause, the action of the verb in dependent position tends to be synchronic with the course of action of the verb in main clause.

"On udaril ego, kogda sporil s nim o politike (He struck him when he was quarreling with him about politics).

"Poka ona eščë žila v Moskve, ona poznakomilas' s Ivanom" (While she was still living in Moscow, she became acquainted with Ivan).

"Xotja on iskal sčastija, on ne uznal ego kogda ono k nemu prišlo" (Although he was searching for happiness he didn't recognize it when it came to him).

"On uslyšal, kak ona smeëtsja" (He heard the way she was laughing).

"Esli vy budete žit' v Moskve zimoj, my pogovorim ob ètom" (If you are going to be in Moscow in the winter, we will have a talk about it).

"Idja v gorod, on ustanet" (While walking to town, he will get tired).

Here again the verb in the subordinate clause is relatively free to assume a relationship of priority:

"Xot' ne vpervye on videl ètot fil'm, on neoxotno pokinul kino" (Though he had seen the film before, he left the theatre unwillingly).

"Esli ona budet govorit' medlenno i jasno, togda on otvetit na vopros" (If she will speak clearly and slowly, he will answer the question).

It regularly assumes a relationship of priority after *posle togo, kak* etc.:

"Posle togo, kak ona žila v Moskve, ona neoxotno vernulas' v Kiev" (After she had lived in Moscow, she unwillingly returned to Kiev).

A perfective verb in a modifying clause or phrase, normally presents itself to the clause that it modifies as a completed action or an action in its result, and thus its action can assume a relationship of priority to the action of the main verb. If the verb in the main clause is imperfective, the context may indicate that its action was going on prior to the time of the completion of the perfective verb in the subordinate clause, but the aspect relation, *per se*, only shows the action of the imperfective verb as taking place at the time of completion of the perfective verb, giving no indication of projection either toward the beginning or toward the end.

"On videl, kak ona pričesalas' " (He saw how she had done her hair).

"Xotja on zamolčal, oni prodolžali gromko govorit' " (Though he had fallen silent, they continued to speak loudly).

"Esli on priedet vo vremja, ja budu s nim igrat' na rojale" (If he comes on time, I shall play the piano with him).

"Vypiv dva-tri bokala vina, ona umela govorit' tol'ko po-russki (After she had drunk two or three glasses of wine, she was able to speak only in Russian).

When both the verb of the subordinate clause and of the main clause are of the perfective aspect, the action of the verb of the subordinate clause is normally not only prior to the end of the action of the verb of the main clause, but—what is extremely significant—prior to the commencement of the action of the verb of the main clause.

"Kogda on prišël, oni pogovorili s polčasa" (When he arrived, they had a talk for half an hour).

"On zametil, kak ona priodelas' " (He noticed how she had dressed herself up).

"Xotja ona uvidela, čto očen' pozdno, no ničego ne skazala" (Although she had seen that it was very late, she said nothing).

"Esli on skažet čto-nibud', ona zaplačet" (If he says anything, she will burst out crying).

"Vypiv dva-tri bokala vina, ona s polčasa prosidela molča" (Having drunk two or three glasses of wine, she sat in silence for about half an hour).

Thus we see that the perfective not only shows the end of the action as a modifier, but shows the beginning of the action as a modified word. Unlike the time relationships of the imperfective which lend themselves readily to displacement, the relationships of the perfective tend to be unyielding. For instance, although the imperfective readily allows itself to be used in subordinate clauses after *posle togo, kak* the perfective is apparently never used after *poka* in the sense of "while," nor, insofar as I can recall or find examples, are verbs of the perfective aspect ever synchronic when one is subordinated to another.

The types of sentences in which the relationship between subordinate and main perfectives changes appear to be the following:

A verb in the future tense in the subordinate clause joined to a verb in the past or present in the main clause may allow the time of the action of the verb in the main clause to precede that of the verb in the subordinate clause: "On edet v gorod, tak kak tam polučit den'gi" (He is going to town since he will receive the money there). Or again, "Tak kak on načnët rabotat' zavtra, on rešil pjanstvovat' " (He decided to get drunk since he would start working the next day).

The normal relationship can also be untied when the main verb is followed by a *čtoby* clause, with either the conditional or the infinitive, or by an infinitive without *čtoby:* "On prišël, čtoby ego uvideli" (He came in order to be noticed). On ubil otca, čtoby deti polučili nasledstvo (He killed his father in order that the children might inherit the property). On poprosilsja uexat' domoj v četverg (He asked to go home on Thursday).

In the presence of contextual indications that clearly demonstrate that it is the result of the perfective verb in the subordinate clause that is thought of chiefly rather than the action of the verb, the relative time of the perfective verb in the subordinate clause may be brought into temporal relationship with the resultative extension of the action rather than with the action itself: "On tol'ko čto poobedal, kak emu pozvonili" (He had just finished dining when they

called him). Here under the influence of *tol'ko čto* the subordinate verb aligns itself with the result of the action of *poobedal*. Again, "Vse ego rodnye uže davno poumirali, kogda ego nakonec vypustili iz tjur'my" (All his relatives were long since dead when he was released from prison). In this sentence it is the phrase, *davno uže*, which emphasizes the result at the expense of the action, and the verbal phrase becomes the equivalent of "they were dead people." *Uže* (already) can take over this function without the aid of *davno*. A similar process apparently explains what happens in sentences in which *prežde čem* (before) is used. In "Ona uvidela ego, prežde čem on ušël" (She saw him before he left), the *prežde* seemingly, despite the placement of the comma, has a relationship with *uvidela* that approximates the relationship of *uže* in such a sentence as Puškin's "Kogda ja vošël v Pritynnyj kabačok, v nem uže sobralos' mnogočislennoe obščestvo" (When I entered the Pritynnyj inn, a large group had gathered). This seems to be an observation that is justified for the contemporary literary language, but the fact that the speech pause as indicated by the comma precedes rather than follows *prežde* is in accord with such colloquial uses of *poka*, in the sense of "before", as, "Ona uspela vyjti zamuž, poka ja priexal v N'ju Jork" (She had married before I got to New York)—a usage that I have not seen paralleled in Russian literature—where it is the entire *poka* clause that serves to throw the main verb out of the action orbit into that of result.

Poka, in the meaning of "until", presents some interesting problems. In the literary language the verb in the subordinate clause is normally negativized, e.g., Gogol's "Ne dam vam est', poka ne zaplatite za prežnee" (I won't give you anything to eat until you have payed for what you have had). Here it is the verb in the subordinate clause that is treated not as a representation of the completed action but of the resulting state. Thus the sentence roughly corresponds to "Ne dam vam est', poka vy ostanetes' dolžnikom, ne zaplativšim za prežnee" (I won't give you anything to eat while you remain a debtor who has not paid for what he has had). However the Russian language behaves as if it were a little uncomfortable with such constructions, for in conversational Russian, at any rate, one hears four variants of this type of construction: "Oni podoždali, poka ona ne priexala," "Oni podoždali, poka ona priexala," "Oni podoždali, poka ona ne priedet," "Oni podoždali, poka ona priedet," all with the meaning, "They waited till she came." (There are, however, differences in respect to the certainty of her arrival). By using the future in the subordinate clause, one escapes the abnormality of the relative tense sequence as long as the verb in the main clause is not itself in the future tense. In the form without the negative in the subordinate clause in which the future is not used—"Oni podoždali, poka ona priexala"—we seem to have a variation of the relationship that was earlier spoken of in connection with the *prežde čem* construction.

The perfective gerund occasionally denotes an action subsequent to that of the main verb if the main verb is itself in the past tense and in the perfective aspect and generally only if the main verb precedes the gerund in the word order of the sentence: cf. Turgenev's "Upal, udarivšis' golovoj o stupen'ki lestnicy" (He fell and struck his head against the stairs). The factor that makes this type of

construction possible seems to be that the gerund is widely regarded as a sort of short-hand substitute for an indicative verb,[55] and the sentence is felt as an equivalent to "Upal i udarilsja golovoj o stupen'ki lestnicy." That the perfective gerund can be used to denote an action that is synchronous with that of the main verb seems to me less certain. The examples that Vinogradov[56] has gathered appear rather to be felt as either relatively prior or relatively subsequent.

Again, the tense relationship of verbs in adnominal relative clauses, while normally following the same rules that have been set forth here for adverbial clauses, allow displacements more freely because in such cases the verb in the subordinate clause is bound to that of the main clause only through the subject of the sentence rather than directly through an adverbial relationship. Hence we frequently meet with sentences of the type: "Marja Petrovna, kotoraja umerla v 1923 godu, rodilas' v Moskve v 1878 godu" (Marja Petrovna, who died in 1923, was born in Moscow in 1878). The participles also allow a comparatively large amount of freedom in displacement of the temporal relationships for the same reason: cf. Pushkin's "22-go večerom uznali čerez barona Šafirova, pribyvšego iz tureckogo lagerja dlja objasnenij s ego veličestvom o nekotoryx spornyx punktax i čerez čas uexavšego obratno, čto vsë šlo xorošo, i čto konečno mir budet zaključën" (On the evening of the twenty-second we learned from Baron Šafirov, who had arrived to straighten out some disputed points with his majesty and who went back an hour later, that everything was going well and peace would surely be concluded).

There are, finally, cases where, in the presence of clear contextual indications, without the aid of special conjunctions (that is, in the presence of some such neutral conjunction as *kogda* or *kak*) or tense indications, a perfective in a subordinate clause is used to indicate an action subsequent to the one indicated by a perfective in the main clause: for example, "Ja nadenu novyj sinij kostjum, kogda pojdu k Anne Ivanovne" (When I go to Anna Ivanovna's, I shall put on my new blue suit). Perhaps, they are most frequently found in interrogative sentences, "Čto ty nadeneš', kogda pojdëš' k Anne Ivanovne?" (What will you put on when you go to Anna Ivanovna's?). The mechanism of such tense relations has already been described; the cause of such reversals of normal tense sequence is this: the need to show one idea as subordinate to another prevails over the need to preserve ordinary relative tense relationships. The point of importance in this connection is that such reversals are impossible when clear contextual indications are absent.

From what has gone before we would seem to be justified in saying that, since the imperfective shows considerable freedom in its relative tense significance whether as main or as subordinate verb and since the perfective shows comparative fixity, the perfective is here again the marked or characterized form while the imperfective generally shows simultaneousness simply because it is available for contrast with the perfective. Both as a modifying form and as a modified

[55] For example, see the conversion formulae in A. M. Zemskij, S. E. Kručkov, and M. V. Svetlaev, *Grammatika russkogo jazyka*, Moscow, 1948, II, 116-7.

[56] Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk*, 391.

form the perfective is characterized by a revelation of the action in its completeness—that is to say with its beginning and its end—and the action of one verb that is expressed in its completeness by the perfective aspect cannot have in a synchronic relationship the action of another verb thus expressed in its completeness, at least as far as subordinate and main verbs in Russian are concerned. The verb in the perfective aspect as a modifying form normally denotes an action finished in prior time to the entire action of a perfective verb used as a modified form. Hence in the modifying form the perfective can be thought of as normally presenting its conclusion (or result) to the verb it modifies while in the modified form the perfective can be thought of as normally presenting its beginning. Contextual counter-indications can change the relative time relationship by equating the perfective verb to the result of its action rather than to the action itself. Disparities in tense and mode can also alter the relative times of the actions, but such contextual and grammatical indicators do not serve to lessen the fact that the perfectives present terminal points in both cases.

Now this seems to offer a valid answer to the question that worried Peškovskij,[57] that is, why the perfective infinitive can not be used in dependence on such verbs as *načinat'-načat'*, *prodolžat'-prodolžit'*, *brosat'-brosit'*, *končat'-končit'*, etc. The infinitive that follows one of these verbs represents a verb in its modifying form. In its modifying form the verb in the perfective aspect presents itself in its conclusion or result. Thus, it would be completely unsuitable in a context where the course of the action is demanded.

At this point it would be well to return to Miklosich's analysis of perfective verbs. First of all there is the question of durative, instantaneous, and iterative perfectives. Since no perfectives seem to be inherently instantaneous (a brief action is not an instantaneous one) as we have seen in the case of the *-nut'* verbs, we can dispense with that category. As for iterative perfective verbs of the perfective aspect, it would seem that Miklosich is misled by an error in approach. He seeks to analyze such verbs as *perestreljat'* (to shoot up) in terms of *streljat'-strelit'* (*vystrelit'*) (to shoot). He argues that since *perestreljat'*, involves several actions in terms of *strelit'* (*vystrelit'*), it must be regarded as an iterative verb. This reasoning—I trust I am presenting it fairly in trying to apply it specifically to Russian verbs—is based on a fallacy. Though *perestreljat'* is etymologically derived from *streljat'-strelit'* prefixed with *pere-* and though it may be, from a lexicographical point of view, convenient to define *perestreljat'* in terms of *streljat'-strelit'* (*vystrelit'*), the action involved in *perestreljat'* from the point of view of that verb is a unified and integral one. It is psychologically not felt as composed of repetitions of something else any more than a word like *čas* (hour), though lexically definable in terms of minutes or seconds, is psychologically felt as 360 seconds or requires any special explanation as a collective singular. The same can be said of such verbs as *perepadat'* (fall in sequence) etc. But can one say that there is a valid difference between unmarked verbs like *kupit'* (buy), where the action may involve several objects or one object purchased as against *kol'nut'* (stab once) and *perestreljat'* (shoot up) where the object is felt as multiple? It would seem not. From the point of view of the sub-

[57] Peškovskij, *Russkij sintaksis*, 98.

ject, as we have seen, these verbs as modifying phrases must all be regarded as normally representing single acts. From the point of view of the modified words, even the *-nut'* verbs allow several objects or adverbial phrases indicating more than one time: e.g., "Šalun kol'nul gvozdëm vsex kotjat v komnate odnogo za drugim" (The prankster stuck all the kittens in the room, one after another, with a nail), or "Šalun kol'nul kotënka gvozdëm dva raza" (The prankster stuck the kitten twice with a nail). The fact that each kitten got a single stab in the first example seems to me all of a piece with the single purchase possibly implied for each house in "On kupil tri doma" (He bought three houses). On the other hand "On perestreljal vsju dič' " (He shot all the game) or "On perestreljal svoj zapas amunicii" (He shot up all his supply of ammunition) represents as single an action from the point of view of the verb as "On kol'nul kotënka gvozdëm" (He stuck a kitten with a nail) or "On kupil dom" (He brought a house). *Dič'* and *zapas* have as independent a singleness apart from the units that may compose them as has *čas*.

However, the question of the duration of the verb does call for some additional comment. Semantically some perfectives have a more immediately apparent durativeness than others. Those verbs in which the action has a sort of natural climax such as *rešat'-rešit'* (decide) can be conceived either in terms of the search for the decision, including the meditations, false decisions, etc., or in terms of the lightning-swift step from indecision to decision. Since the imperfective is not characterized in terms of the completeness of the action while the perfective is so characterized, the imperfective is frequently used, especially when put in direct contrast with the perfective, to denote the unconsummated activity while the perfective, in emphasizing its completeness, tends to reduce the meaning of the verb to its smallest semantically recognizable form: e.g., the change from uncertainty to certainty. This is what we have in such sentences as, "Oni dolgo rešali vopros, no ničego ne rešili" (They tried a long time to decide the question, but didn't reach any decision). However, the semantically maximal meaning is not confined to the imperfective: cf. "On medlenno i s bol'šim trudom rešil vopros" (He slowly and laboriously decided the question). By the same token the imperfective can be used with the minimal meaning: "On momental'no rešaet voprosy" (He instantaneously decides questions). Here even if there is more than one action involved, each action represents the verb at its minimal semantic content. Nevertheless, the use of the minimal content is more frequent with perfectives than with imperfectives.

However, those perfective verbs that have no natural climax, but simply represent something as done for a while, *pogovorit'* (talk a while) can not make the same semantic contrasts, and always insist on their duration. Hence, while all the verbs of perfective aspect have inherent duration, some have it more manifestly at all times than others.

REVIEW OF THE DEFINITIONS

In view of the knowledge that we have acquired, let us review the definitions of the meaning of the perfective aspect with which the paper began.

The first definition, in stating that the perfective aspect represents the action

as completed, has several faults. In the first place it does not clarify the reference of the perfective aspect to the beginning, middle, and end of the action. In the second place, it does not note the normally semelfactive nature of the perfective in relationship to its subject. In the third place, it offers no explanation of the temporal relationship of the main to the subordinate verb. The variant of this explanation that was cited from Avanesov and Sidorov compounds the faults of the original by adding to it those of the concept of the point of action.

The second definition, that the perfective introduces the concept of a term or limit in the action, is at fault primarily in seeking to explain such verbs as *zagovorit'* as aspective inceptives. This leads to the concept of the perfective as referring to a single term rather than both terms of the action. This definition also fails to note the semelfactive nature of the relationship of the perfective to its subject, and the relative temporal implications of the perfective.

The third definition, that the perfective represents the action as a point is almost completely incorrect. The punctual concept is frequently manifestly ruled out by the nature of the verb (e.g., *pogovorit'*) or by the nature of modifiers of the verb (e.g., *medlenno*). Where at times the meaning of near-instantaneous action can with some justice be considered valid, the imperfective can also carry this meaning.

The fourth definition that the perfective indicates limitation in time, is true, but insufficient and somewhat vague.

The fifth definition, that the perfective aspect represents the result of the action of the verb, has at times even a certain grammatical validity. We have seen that under clearly manifest conditions of context the idea of the result of the action rather than the action proper can allow a simple explanation of certain displacements of relative tense that would be difficult to explain otherwise. But, in general, the sense of result is inferential and secondary. It is always subject to need of contextual bolstering. To regard the meaning of result rather than the meaning of action as the primary function of a perfective verb is on a level with confusing a symptom with the disease.

Vinogradov's definition seems simply to combine a number of definitions and, thereby, to lose in unity without making a particular gain in completeness.

THE GENERAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In Russian the normal verb has two aspects, perfective and imperfective. Those verbs that are lacking in one of these aspects must be regarded as defective in much the same way that nouns lacking in the singular or plural number must be regarded as defective. Each aspect usually has a morphologically distinct stem. In the majority of verbs possessing both aspects, the two stems are distinguished by internal changes (e.g., *rešat'-rešit'*, *ubivat'-ubit'*) rather than by suppletion (*govorit'-skazat'*, *delat'-sdelat'*).

There is no system of sub-aspects of the perfective aspect. Each imperfective must be considered either as operating against a single perfective aspect or against zero perfective aspect.[58] Each perfective must be considered as operating

[58] In the case of *rezat'*, for example, where the various meanings have different perfective

against a single imperfective or against zero imperfective aspect.[59] Hence we never have correlated groups of perfective verbs that indicate the beginning of an action as opposed to its conclusion or an action conceived of as durative as opposed to an action conceived of as instantaneous. Here it is of some importance to add that though there are major groups of imperfective verbs that, apparently, never have linear perfective aspects, there seems to be no significant group of perfectives that lacks completely verbs of a linear imperfective aspect.[60]

Verbs of the perfective aspect as modified forms are characterized by the completeness of the revelation of the action, as modifying forms in relation to the subject by the semelfactiveness of the action. Moreover verbs of the perfective aspect are characterized in respect to relative tense. As modifiers, they normally show their final term and represent a prior action; as modified, they normally represent their action with reference to its initial term.

The imperfective is uncharacterized in all these respects.

Perhaps the best brief definition would be: the perfective aspect of a verb is characterized by completeness of revelation in respect to the predicate phrase, semelfactiveness of action in respect to the subject (or other modified word), and normally, when in subordination, by completion of the action prior to the inception of the action of another verb in the perfective aspect in the main clause. The imperfective is uncharacterized in these respects.

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aspects, each meaning should be accounted a separate word. In those few cases where, according to Ušakov both an ordinary perfective and a semelfactive operate against a single verb, cf. again certain meanings of *rezat'*, if there is really a difference in meaning and both forms are really in use, it would be best, in the absence of any general system of semelfactives, to treat *rezat'-reznut'* as a separate word also. The general problems of the semelfactive have already been dealt with at length in the paper. See those sections.

[59] In this connection *pročitat'* is to be regarded as one word in the series *čitat-pročitat'* and as another word in *pročityvat'-pročitat'*, etc.

[60] This is of importance because while the imperfective is uncharacterized, the perfective is characterized. It is generally acknowledged that all types of perfectives can have linear imperfectives except the double prefixed forms such as *ponabirat'*. But even in this group imperfectives, though rare, do occur: cf. *povskakivat'* (imperfective)-*povskakat'* (perfective), meaning "jump up, one after another".

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